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constitution (about which they asked many questions) was a democratic one; for, they said, the Administration always supported the chiefs against the commoners.

The villages to which commoner leaders are appointed differ from all other Bantu villages of which we have knowledge in that they consist of groups of age-mates, not groups of kinsmen; boys build with contemporaries and remain with them through life; girls join the villages of their husbands at marriage; therefore relatives, other than husband and wife and young children, do not live together. Nevertheless kinship ties are important, for property circulates within the kinship group rather than within the village, and kinsmen are believed to be mystically interdependent, in a way in which fellow villagers are not. The most prized possession of the Nyakyusa are cattle, for cattle enable a man to marry, to live in comfort, to gain prestige by feasting his friends; and cattle pass along the roads of kinship. They pass between brothers, and half-brothers, and the sons of brothers; between fathers and sons; and between affines. Kinsmen also participate in common rituals, praying to common ancestors, and seeking protection from mystical dangers which are thought to travel, like cattle, along the roads of kinship. Ever fearful lest a quarrel among them should bring misfortune on all, they strive to live in harmony.

The range of kinship recognized varies somewhat with the status of the family concerned and the proximity and personalities of its members, but, generally speaking, economic and religious co-operation link the descendants of a common grandfather, and marriage between the descendants of a common great-grandfather is excluded. A legal marriage is effected by the passage of cattle from the groom's group to the bride's, and it is this passage which is said to create kinship (*ubuhamu*), with the consequent mystical interdependence, between a man and his wife, and between the one partner in a marriage and the close kinsmen of the other. Polygyny is the ideal of every pagan, and it is made possible by the ten years' difference in the average marriage age of men and women. Girls are betrothed very young and finally join their husbands at puberty, while few pagan men marry under twenty-five. Inherited cattle are controlled by the older generation and polygyny is the prerogative of age. For property passes not directly from father to son, but from brother to brother,

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through each group of full brothers, until, when the last full brother is dead, and the son of the eldest is an adult, the family stock comes to him. Thus few men under forty (other than chiefs) have more than one wife. Of 3,000 tax-payers (presumed to be 18 years and over) in Selya, 34 per cent were bachelors, 37 per cent monogamists, and 29 per cent polygynists. Plural marriages breed wealth, for the polygynist is likely to command the labour of many sons as well as several wives, and in due course he expects to receive the marriage cattle of many daughters.

Social status turns primarily on age, sex, and the control and distribution of wealth. As we have seen, the position of a chief is hereditary, but kinship with a chief does not carry office, nor are the kinsmen of chiefs conspicuously wealthy. Every man in turn hopes to control the property attaching to the house into which he was born, and all who live long enough do so. But there is a delayed right of primogeniture, for the senior son of a senior son inherits the bulk of the family stock when it passes to his generation, and the eldest of each group of full brothers has a special claim to the cattle coming in from the marriages of his sisters.

Seniority, whether within the context of the lineage, or of the hierarchy of age-villages, is something respected in itself, but wealth carries authority and prestige only in so far as it is used generously, in hospitality: one man is great and distinguished (*mwiyu*) because he feeds people, another of little account because he is poor or mean.

Women occupy a position very subordinate to men in Nyakyusa society. They play no part in public life, except in so far as the two great wives of a chief, and the first wife of a village headman co-operate with their husbands in rituals; and in the relationship of husband and wife, as well as in that of father and daughter, a woman is expected to show obedience and respect. Her deference is expressed conventionally in her crouching to greet men (*vide* Plate IX), and in her use of the submissive *tee* ('Yes, my lord') when addressed by them. Having no great chiefs and little regard for rank, Nyakyusa men show no trace of subservience in their manner to each other, but they expect a meek compliance from all women. The only relationships with a male in which a woman may in some measure assert herself are those which she has with a brother, and with a brother's sons. Leader-

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stand protected from insects: hence his title 'he of the heap of hot ashes' (*ngwakyeme, vide supra*, p. 34). The protection of their cattle from raiders by day, and witches by night, was one of the main co-operative activities of the village, and each herd-group within the village was particularly concerned with the protection of its own cattle. For the boys of one herd-group the association is very close since they are together on the pasturage for the greater part of the day. Friendships then formed sometimes last a lifetime.

A few rich men choose to herd their cattle separately from those of their neighbours. 'They are the men who have many cattle! They want to show off their herd, so that men may say: "That's the herd of so and so." ' Sometimes their sons, against orders, foregather with other herd-boys on the pasturage, but they are careful to bring home the herds separately. We knew three men near Rungwe who were spoken of as herding their cattle separately, though in fact their sons often joined friends in the pasturage. To herd alone is regarded as somewhat ostentatious,[1] and only a few individuals do it.

Many rich men do not even keep all their cattle at their homesteads for fear of the jealous witchcraft of their neighbours. Instead, they disperse their herds among friends in other villages (of their own or neighbouring chiefdoms) believing that the cattle-*envy* in that way escape danger. Porukoto explained: 'We place cattle with friends (*ukufyalya*) on account of sickness and death. Supposing I have three or four cows, and they all calf, but the calves die, then I place the cows with friends. People say: "The cows will escape in another village or chiefdom." If, when cattle die and are cut up, wounds are found in their stomachs,[2] then the owner places the others with friends.' Not all of them are sent to the same place.

The fear of witchcraft was traditionally, and is still, the main reason for placing out cattle, but nowadays they are sent away for other reasons also: Nyakyusa living around Rungwe often send cattle to friends on the other side of the mountains in Mbeya district, where grazing is particularly good, and wealthy Christians place out cattle because their wives, working single-handed,

[1] A beast which grows others may be handed apart without any imputation of pride to the owner.

[2] Taken as evidence that they have been killed by witchcraft, *vide infra*, p. 116.

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ing audiences watch their friends in the detachment of the King's African Rifles at bayonet drill in Mzuzu.[1]

Display is felt to be particularly appropriate to young people, and bachelors were held to be the fiercest warriors, but neither dancing nor fighting was confined to young men. The chief Mwaipopo (Plate V) was famous as a skilful and ardent dancer when over seventy, and the leader in war was the senior headman of the country, who, if not already married when he took office, had to marry almost immediately, since his wife shared in the ritual of establishing his house. Furthermore the villages of married men of the ruling generation fought, as well as the villages of their bachelor brothers and sons.

That the Nyakyusa had some skill in warfare is certain, for they defeated and drove off Ngoni raiders and warriors of the Sangu chief Merere,[2] but they never developed a military kingdom like that of the Bemba to the west, or the Hehe to the east, nor did they raid at large like the Masai and Ngoni. Their geographical position sheltered them very considerably from outside attack, and discouraged raiding abroad. They confined themselves mostly to lifting the cattle of neighbouring chiefdoms.

Cattle, whether they be spoils of war or inherited wealth, are displayed. Not only does a long byre add to the dignity of a homestead, but, when there is some ceremony at the home of a rich man, he shows off his herd by driving it round and round the homestead. At other times his sons gallop it along the village street, the iron bells with which the animals are adorned ringing merrily. Nyakyusa smiths make cow-bells in sets,[3] to chime in harmony, and the aim of a rich man is to own a set of bells which ring a full chime, and a herd large enough to carry them. Nowadays those who own bicycles display them in the same sort of way, riding round and round the homestead at a ceremony, and ringing the bells madly.

Unlike the enjoyment of good company (*ukwangala*), display

[1] This detachment was not supposed to include Nyakyusa who were recruited for a detachment stationed outside the district, but in fact Nyakyusa got in by posing as men from Ngonde, Nyasaland.

[2] D. Kerr-Cross, 'Country-Inhabitants north of Lake Nyasa', *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. V (1895), p. 119-29; Leopold, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 56, speaks of the Nyakyusa as 'brave as one'.

[3] We deposited a set in the Livingstone Memorial Museum, Livingstone, N. Rhodesia.

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feared, I think people follow the custom, many have come to see me.'

There is no criticism of men or women who come to a burial to dance rather than to weep: 'They are not relatives—it is our custom of mourning.' They are saluting the dead and 'seeing him on his way', they are helping 'to comfort the relatives'. The presence of non-relatives at a burial is variously determined by feelings of affection and grief, of respect and sympathy for the family, by a sense of shame, by fear of being accused of witchcraft, and finally by the attraction of the crowds, the lively conversation, the dancing, and the meat.

At the burial of a Nyakyusa Christian there is little unrestrained wailing and no dancing; instead the young men of the congregation gather round the grieving relatives and sing cheerful hymns, full of the certainty of Heaven, 'to accompany him on his way to God' and 'to comfort the mourners'.

(c) Prestige at funerals

As has already been indicated, the length of the mourning depends upon the status of the deceased. It is short for a child—there is no sacrifice and no crowd; for a rich man it is longer than for a poor man; for the kinsman of a chief longer than for a commoner. Mwaikambo explained:

> Many conceal their position (*ubufumbi*), it only appears at death. People may never know that a man is rich—only those who build close to him will know—but when he dies many know; many people come to the funeral. For a commoner, an ordinary person, the drums usually play a lament for two days only, sometimes for three, but for a village headman they play the lament for four days, or perhaps a week, and also for a man who has married a chief's daughter it continues for four days or a week. Then people ask why the drums are playing for so long and the reply comes: 'He married into the chief's family. The chief honours him in kinship.' Drums follow the importance of a man.
>
> Those who stay longest at a funeral are kinsmen. If a man has many kinsmen then the funeral will last long because his kinsmen do not return home quickly. A chief has many kinsmen, more than anyone else, because the people of his chiefdom are all like kinsmen. With a village headman also the people who build with him are somewhat like kinsmen, and his funeral lasts a long time.

The size of the crowd at a funeral depends very largely upon the amount of meat provided, and this in turn depends upon the

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wealth of the family in cattle and the number of its affines. There is a direct relationship between the number of cattle killed and the number of people who come to a burial. On one occasion we were told: 'There are not many people here because there is little meat; they only killed one bull!' And this connection can be observed at any burial; hundreds of people come to mourn the rich, only a few to mourn the poor. And if no meat is killed there is usually no dancing at all. But once a crowd has gathered it is in itself an inducement to others to come. When men were dancing the funeral dance in the rain a neighbour commented: 'They will say there is no rain for many women are present.' We have seen a crowd of 2,000 or more at a funeral, with 100 men dancing at once.

The meat is divided among the chief, the relatives, the neighbours, and the non-relatives from a distance. To the chief of the country is given the breast and ribs of one beast: 'This is to honour him.' To each affine who brings a beast a whole leg is returned to be eaten. To the various groups of non-relatives from other chiefdoms is given sometimes a side, sometimes a leg, and the rest of the meat is divided between the relatives and neighbours who have come from the same or adjoining villages. At large funerals, where many cows are killed and where people gather from all the villages of the chiefdom, a portion of the meat is presented to each of the various village headmen to eat with his men; at smaller funerals the division is made less formally.

'A man's very own cow, that of his lineage, is eaten by the people of the country, not the relatives, because the people [non-relatives] always looked at it thinking: "It's ours." ' A picture of ghoulish expectation? That indeed is an element of Nyakyusa thought. While we were in the country a number of chiefs forbade the offering of funeral meat to non-relatives, for, it was believed, gluttonous neighbours sometimes killed a man by witchcraft[1] in order to feast at his funeral.

The kinsmen of the dead man gain prestige from a lavish funeral. They are compelled to sacrifice by fear lest the anger of the shades, or the 'breath' of their neighbours, should bring misfortune upon them, and they are rewarded by the admiration of men when they do so.

Social pressure is not always exerted upon the members of the dead man's family to provide cattle themselves. If he left sufficient cattle to sustain the family dignity they only kill from his own

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, p. 33.

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herd. But if he has not left sufficient, then they are ashamed not to make good the deficiency. 'If no cows are killed at a burial we others [non-relatives] say that it was a mean burial, that the dead man was a pauper without kin, for if he had had kinsmen they would have killed cows for him. So then the relatives grieve their poor griefs alone, we others don't go to that burial.' To a poor burial the members of the same village do in fact come, as they are obliged to do; but few other people come, and there is seldom any dancing.

There is one other situation in which a member of the family is under obligation to kill. If the dead man is buried by his 'father' at his 'father's' place, then one of his 'father's' cows must be killed. But if his 'father' does not choose to exercise his privilege of carrying the body to his place for burial (and he need not do so unless he wishes), then there is no such obligation.

Upon affines, however, the obligation is absolute, unless they actually have not got a cow or bull available. 'If a father-in-law brings no beast to his son-in-law's burial, then his daughter is estranged from him, she asks angrily why he does not bring one, seeing that her husband has died.' 'If a son-in-law does not bring a cow to his father-in-law's burial, though he has one that he might have brought, he is ashamed before men. They say to him: "Your wife's father has died, why did you not bring a cow? Perhaps you think you have a father-in-law still alive (i.e. the dead man's heir, to whom all previous obligations are due, and with whom the relationship of affinity continues very much as before), but he himself, your own father-in-law, has died."' And thus, if insufficient cows are killed to maintain the family dignity, both the family and the affines are made to feel ashamed.

Occasionally a friend of the dead man, who is no relative, brings a bull to kill, as a sign of friendship and affection, but he has no obligation to do so.

Social position, both in its practical aspect of authority and in its emotion aspect of prestige, depends primarily, among the Nyakyusa, on the generous use of wealth, or, to put it more simply, on feeding people. The Nyakyusa insisted on this again and again in explaining the relative status of different people: one man is great and distinguished (*sitiya*) because he feeds people, another who feeds people less is less distinguished. At a lavish funeral, where many people gather and eat meat, they go home in

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
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764 the evening saying with admiration that it was a most impressive
556 (asigwe) burial; months or years afterwards it is still remembered and described with pride by the family, with admiration by the neighbours. What is chiefly remembered is the number of cattle killed and the number of people present; sometimes the vigour of the women's wailing and of the men's dancing is also described.

(f) *A particular burial* (recorded by G. W.)

764 It is the second day; the man, who was quite young, died yesterday afternoon and was buried early this morning. I arrive at 7.30 a.m. to find that the wailing is the dominant activity. The dead man's house is full of weeping men and women, shedding tears and wailing in the conventional high-pitched voice. His sister, his young wife, a step-mother, a classificatory brother and two half-brothers, with many other women, are inside the house. The noise is considerable. The rest of the women, fifty or more, are seated just outside, in and around an unfinished bamboo house which he died leaving half-built; they too are weeping and wailing. A few men are seated in a group on the opposite side of the swept place facing the women; they are either silent or talking soberly.

764 The emotional pitch is very high. The classificatory brother leaves
781 the house and walks about round the new grave with his hands to his head, shedding tears and calling: 'Alas! Alas! What kin are left? Alas! What kin are left?' He is a mature man about forty years old. Then he takes by the hand a half-sister of the dead man, a woman of thirty or more, smothered in mud and pot-black, her belly supported by many bark-cloths, and with a baby on her back; together they walk over the grave weeping and wailing, addressing each other in words that I fail to distinguish, and stumbling about as though blind with grief. The baby sleeps quietly all the time. Then comes an old woman, stepmother of the dead man, leading a daughter in each hand (his half-sisters), all wailing, shedding tears and calling out indistinguishable words. They sit down on the newly-filled grave with their arms on one another's shoulders rocking to and fro and weeping. More people keep arriving and in the background now is the insistent wailing of seventy or a hundred women in and outside the house.

For the first hour after my arrival the drums are only occasionally beaten, and a few young men rush across the grave brandishing spears, but only spasmodically.

The two half-brothers, after wailing in the house, come outside and walk up and down together still weeping. Then they each take a spear and run back and forth several times wailing the dead man's name.

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ndumya ulufumbo). Rich people kill a cow 'to clear out the litter' 764
ubuhili, like those killed at the burial, is said to go with the deceased [854]
o the land of the shades.

Some time later (the date varies from one ritual to another) they 764
uild a little hut at the intersection of two paths—cross-roads—or, 946
f there is no cross-roads near, on the path to the stream, and in
his hut they make a hearth with fire-bricks (*amafigo*); a fire is
ighted and each participant in turn puts oil-seeds from the
ngwangati tree into a potsherd on the fire, saying as he does so:
'This is the death of my mother (etc.).' The seeds are mixed with 764
ondicine and, when they are roasted, are ground for ointment.
Then beans are put on with water in the same fashion, each parti-
cipant pouring a little water and saying: 'This is the ritual of my
mother (etc.).' Next, the participants are made to sit down on a
ark-cloth. The officiant draws lines on the head of each with a
ouch of *ilinjala* grass dipped in the lees of beer, and as she shaves
im she mocks him saying: 'Poor fool, it found its mother was
ead, went stealing, and they have speared it on the head.' Then
he participants go to wash, each wearing two banana leaves
ound his loins and two round his neck. One of each pair is a
lantain, and it is put on first, the other is a sweet banana and it
omes on top. And each participant sticks a plantain into his (or
er) waistband in front, and a sweet banana behind. When they [793]
ome to the stream each participant sits down in it and the
fficiant puts pebbles between his fingers and toes, in the crooks of
is elbows and knees, in his mouth and ears, and on his head.
These, and the leaves and bananas he wore, are allowed to flow
way in the water. They return to the temporary hut carrying
lowers, *kalengelenge* and *kalanje*, which they throw on to the roof,
nd the officiant pours water she has brought in a little calabash
n to the thatch above the doorway, while each participant in
urn runs through the drops, out at a back door, in again and out
hrough the drops. As they come home millet is scattered on the
round before them, then they eat roasted bananas with lentils
and sometimes pumpkin-seeds) stuck in them as in the Seiya
itual, boiled bananas and beans, a bean mash, and roasted
hicken or, sometimes, meat. The bananas are from the plantain
tem they stole and from a sweet banana stem provided by the
amily, and some of the food is salted, some unsalted. As they eat
hey look in the direction from which their lineage came, then the
fficiant anoints them with ointment (made from the oil-seeds

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house. Then she goes in and steals a piece of firewood from the left[1] and runs off with it, laughing. The officiant pursues her and makes her drop it and gives her medicine, while the company cry: 'A thief, a thief!' She takes the firewood back to her husband's home. 'It is a sign that she has entered her father's house, just as the spear is a sign that she has entered the house of another husband.' In rich families the new husband sends a bull which is killed and eaten at the ritual.

Our informants were agreed that 'there is no fear of the gasping cough if a woman runs away from her husband and goes to a lover', and in practice no ritual is performed when she visits her father after divorce and re-marriage, but it is perhaps significant that such a situation could scarcely have arisen in the past, since divorce by agreement rarely, if ever, occurred. An adulterer fled, if he could, with his lover to another chiefdom, breaking off all relations with her kin.

(3) *The overt purpose and symbolism*

Now we turn to the Kukwe interpretation of events. Our two principal informants here were Mwasalemba, an elderly pagan man, brother to the chief Perukaso, whose wife, Syungu, acted as officiant at rituals in the chief's family, and Kakuse, a young doctor who had learnt the medicines from his mother. Mwasalemba was much more coherent than Syungu herself, and his interpretation was confirmed by Kakuse and numerous other informants. Again I give the interpretation of the two principal informants without any editing other than placing consecutively statements made on different occasions.

i. *Mwasalemba's interpretation.* (Recorded by G. W. and translated by him soon afterwards.)

Mwasalemba: Perhaps a youth, perhaps a girl, runs mad; he runs about naked so that we say: 'He's mad, why doesn't he cover himself?' He goes to the place of defaecation and takes filth and eats it: he goes into people's houses and takes things, he might even take some things from you, from a European, without fear; he knows not what he does. Sometimes, after a visit to a doctor, he recovers altogether and never has the fit again—that is the lesser kind of madness. But sometimes he recovers and then the fit takes him again later—that is the more serious

[1] The left (*ipisi*) corridor of horizontal beams running at wall level across a portion of the hut. Here every married woman keeps a supply of dry firewood. It is her private storeplace which may not be touched without her permission.

2: Wilson K-9 (1934-1938)1957 F%17 Ngonde F%17
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[783] [784] [785] went the son into his father's house. He walks through the whole house and the mothers acclaim him. This is the sign to show everybody that he has entered his father's house. The women call the *ukulola*. They are rejoicing because he has entered.

There are, however, some who do not return to their fathers. They remain strangers [*abanda* as opposed to *abakowa*] until their death. There is a young man at my home who took his father's wife. Where he find to no one knows because he is still in hiding. His father separated from him altogether.

A son must always bring something and the father must collect his friends. If they just agree with one another and people do not eat anything, then the son will not be settled in well. He will be ill. They say that the illness comes from the shades. If the father is angry he mutters (*ukulimanya*) and they hear. At first the people are not angry, but later on, when they have heard from the father about the matter, they also are angry. It is as if they help the father to mutter. Their shades are not there, only those of the father's lineage, but his shades have regard to the people. If the people do not eat anything and are not present, they are not satisfied even though the father is satisfied. The father prays to his shades alone in the evening with water in his mouth, and they pour out beer on the hearth-bricks.

[784] [785] [783] KASUNGU: If a rich commoner has died and the heir buries him with only one cow, the shades and people are angry with the heir, breath falls on his body; perhaps he falls ill, or perhaps his child falls ill. But they do not meet; people, the witches, are angry and the shades are angry; the shades because they have buried him with only one cow, people because they have not eaten meat, but the shades and people are independent of each other. The oracle says: 'The shades are angry,' it does not speak of people. It knows that people also are angry, but it speaks only of the shades. And when he makes amends he prays in the evening; the next day he calls people and kills a cow and he throws the *ijo mupo* meat in the banana grove and says: 'Here it is, Father,' and people say: 'Indeed, he did wrong, his father was angry.' But they do not confess, saying: 'We were angry.' No, they say: 'The shades were angry.'

[784] [783] Another type of case is that in which 'the breath of men' is believed to have fallen on an infant because of its mother's disrespectful behaviour towards her husband's parents or husband's father's sister. When a child is thin and ailing with *ingolo*, the cure is for the mother to confess to the doctor who comes to treat the child all the rude things she has said, and provide beer (exceptionally a bull) to offer to her injured parents-in-law. They drink the beer with their neighbours and with her well. Ambilikile's wife

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431 neighbours give her gifts after her initiation it is that she may 'cease to avoid them', and a woman may give a small gift to her husband's father's sister, and thereafter look at her. Nowadays, a [206] father-in-law, in exceptional cases, kills a bull for his daughter-in-law so that she may look at him.[1]

•556 577 Great prestige attaches to generosity, particularly generosity with food. A chief or village headman is one who *feeds* people, and generosity is displayed both in informal feasts for neighbours and on the formal occasions of ritual. A father who is generous in the feasts provided for his daughter at her initiation and marriage gains prestige; if he is stingy his affines and his neighbours comment on it; he both loses their respect and fears lest he may even fall ill from 'the breath of men'. If the groom's family fail to provide sufficient, the bride's father does not hesitate to scold them for it, and they reply with humility which may be so exaggerated as to verge on boasting. It is conventional for the groom to plead poverty but at the same time he and his kin compete with the bride's family in preparing quantities of fine food. The pride and excitement over feasts is clearly brought out in the comments on funerals, the remarks of a mother on the return of her daughter to her husband after the birth of the first child, and Angombwike's account of marriage negotiations and gifts (pp. 31–4, 148, 253–5). The principals in any ritual are the centre of attention and may gain prestige from its performance, as a bride does, but what concerns the Nyakyusa much more is the reputation of the family serving the feast. Here the emphasis is very different from what it [171] is in the Pondo ritual for the initiation of diviners, or the Lunda rituals of misfortune.

[1] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, p. 85.

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§77 There is much more talk among the Nyakyusa of misfortune
777 from the shades or the anger of neighbours, than of blessing, but
●556 there is an idea, somewhat vague but real, that generosity and kindliness will bring blessing (*ulungile*). Ambilikile, a Christian teacher who had grown up in a pagan home, said:

> My mother tells me that my father was in the habit of feeding people, those who were not his relatives. People went to a distance and brought medicines for fertility and gave them to him, hence they said: 'He is very kind; food never grows short at his home.' She also told me that my father died very old. He did not die of disease, but of old age, no breath being left in him. This was because men were always saying: 'May they stand by him, may they bless him (*bamumulage, bamupe*),' not to his face but to others. They said that he lived long because of the blessing of men. Yes, they say that the food of a kindly man never gets finished, that of a stingy man finishes; he himself suffers hunger.

763 Mwaisumo described a father on his death-bed blessing a favourite son, allocating cattle to him, and telling him:

> Care for the children I have left, keep on good terms with them, then you will be rich in everything like your father. I cared for my children, I was not harsh (*okali*), so complain to me of anything that troubles you. If you are like this the property in your home will be plentiful, people will be astonished and say: 'He is like his father.'

431 Of a man given a cow by the chief, it was sometimes said: 'The
775 shades have blessed him; he has a righteous (*agulefu*) shade.'

Although our Nyakyusa informants talked a great deal about
754 the danger of neglecting rituals and angering senior relatives,
673 living and dead, the number of cases of misfortune attributed to
621 their anger is small in comparison with the number attributed to witchcraft or 'the breath of men'. (Ten as compared with sixty-three.) There is no reason to suppose that one type of case was concealed when the others were reported to us, and it is clear that the Nyakyusa prefer to make neighbours in the age-village, rather than kinsmen, the scapegoat for their misfortunes. Even when the wrong done is against a kinsman it is often the neighbours, rather than the shades, who are said to have brought punishment on the wrong-doer.

777 At the same time, we were assured by one informant after an-
621 other that people blame the shades or Kyala for misfortune when it is really the neighbours who are responsible! Angombwike argued that men fear to accuse the neighbours, who are slow to

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763 QUESTION: Why the gathering?

MWAMBU: We were startled to hear that he had died. They raised the lament of death in the morning and his cattle went home when Kasitile and I were on the pasture land. We were startled to see Katanya's cattle going home and said: 'He has died.' But his relatives saw that he had not died. They said it is taboo to lament when someone is still alive.

QUESTION: Why do cows come home when a man dies?

MWAMBU: It is a form of mourning. They should also weep and say farewell. He had property. For if I, Mwambu, die, though I do not have cattle myself, yet because I am the son of Mwaipopo cattle are 764 killed at the funeral. It is impressive. But if I were a commoner and ●536 had no cattle, then the funeral would be a flop. There would be no meat and people would say: 'He has not yet died, he has left one head.' They count the cattle to kill. If an important commoner dies, one who has cattle, then his funeral is impressive. People dance at his homestead and say: 'Our fellow, who has died, was a strong man who danced the war-dance in the homesteads.' And if he was tough in disputes, if he always got the better of them and no one ever got his cow, then they say: 'A tough fellow has died. May he leave a son as tough as himself. He died with his toughness.' They praise him.

782 QUESTION: Tell me about the killing of Katanya's bull.

MWAMBU: He killed the bull without telling his neighbours, but when he poured out the beer he called Mwainyopolela and Kapuguso and two others. There were four. He had built in Bunkali village in which there are ten homesteads, but, customarily, we do not call all the neighbours, only those who are nearest. Only if I have killed a full-grown beast do I call them all and give them a leg. Yes, it was a big bull and perhaps it is on account of that that they are angry. When they came they were startled, saying: 'They are drinking beer! And there is meat lying outside!' They entered and drank a little. Then Katanya divided the meat for his relatives and took his own. He gave to Mwainyopolela and his fellows three ribs. Then M. said to his three fellows: 'Let us go home. I will not take this little piece of meat.' So they all went away. The other three ate the meat, only M. did not.

QUESTION: So they were angry?

754 MWAMBU: Perhaps! We say sometimes: 'They were angry and ate
757 him.' But perhaps it was sorcery, because just now three snakes entered the house of his chief wife—the *isolen* snakes. One entered and they killed it. Another entered and they killed it. Then they caught the third to take to a doctor, the son of Mwakanyamale. The doctor said: 'This snake is sorcery,' and he will find a medicine to give them to drink that the illness may be slight. But he has not yet done so.

6:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

until the settlement of the Arabs and Europeans in Ngonde, was exchanged "for cloths and rings" with the *Langwani* (*i.e.* Arab or half-caste) traders, who regularly crossed the lake from Mwela.

Now the Kyungus of Mbande when compared with their divine-cousins the Lwembes of Lubaga, were fortunate in their geographical position. The conditions which kept them in contact with a market in the early period are beyond our knowledge, we only know the bare fact. But with the opening of the trade route from the east the greater accessibility of Mbande is at once obvious. Mbande is only eight miles from the shores of the lake, Lubaga is forty. Moreover the plain between Lubaga and the lake was occupied in this middle period by Nyakyusa chiefs only distantly related to the Lwembe. Our evidence suggests that, in any case, the traders from Mwela did not reach the north end of the lake in their travels till some time after reaching Ngonde. And it is undoubted that when they did so they traded with the chiefs on the shore one by one and never journeyed inland to Lubaga. To Lubaga the lake shore chiefs sent cows to beg for rain and health, but they sent no ivory; from Lubaga they believed they received their rain and health; but it was from the traders direct that they got the coveted cloth. Ivory was but dry bones without a market, so that the Lwembes had no inducement to claim it.

In Ngonde the Langwani traders bought relatively little ivory from others save the Kyungu; he alone held large stocks and to him they came first. They gave him red, white and dark cloths and rings also in exchange for the tusks, eating and drinking at his expense during their stay.

Some of the cloths and rings were at once given by him to the nobles of Ngonde, on each occasion that the traders came; others were used as clothes by himself and his household; others were stored for future gifts; while still others he exchanged, either for boys with the men of Mwela and the Kisi, or with his own people for ivory or slaves.

Polygyny and a differential bride-price were important sources of wealth for all the rulers of Ngonde. The numbers of cattle given to great-commoners, nobles or chiefs at the marriages of their daughters were greater than the numbers given to ordinary men. This was a matter of prestige. Moreover girls married younger than boys, so that all fathers usually had an interval between receiving cattle at the marriages of their daughters and giving them away again at the marriages of their sons; during this interval the cattle increased and the increment accrued to them. Now chiefs, nobles and great-commoners usually gave away more cattle at the marriages of their sons than did ordinary men; this again was a matter of prestige. But it did not alter the fact that greater numbers of cattle than usual passed through their hands; and

6:Wilson E-6 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

on the instalment that accrued to them was also greater than usual. And thus they normally had more cattle than ordinary men.

Some of these extra cattle they expended in marrying more wives of their own, who bore them more children. The girl children later brought in more marriage-cattle, and meanwhile the wives and unmarried children worked in the fields and so enabled the rulers to entertain more often and more lavishly than their less married subjects. And it was by lavish entertainment above all that the prestige of a ruler was maintained.

(b) *THE EXPENDITURE OF MBANDE AND OTHER AUTHORITIES.*

All important guests at Mbande, whether traders or subordinates, were, as we have seen, entertained at the Kyungu's expense. Now the entertainment of guests and subordinates is a quite indispensable function of every primitive political authority; power and prestige cannot possibly be maintained without it. Its importance in primitive constitutions has recently been pointed out by Richards in a paper[1] on the constitution of the Bemba tribe in Northern Rhodesia; and the facts of Ngonde tradition bear out her conclusions. Chiefs and nobles were given food and beer when they visited Mbande and the position of Mbande could not otherwise have been maintained. And the Kyungu, like the Citimukulu of the Bemba, also gave to his subordinates gifts of more permanent value.

Cloths were given both to chiefs and nobles. We remember that the very first Kyungu at Mbande is said to "have given headcloths to the indigenous rulers" who, in accepting them, accepted also his overlordship; and from that time onwards the practice continued. Whenever a territorial noble died the nobles of Ngonde came from the Kyungu and formally presented his successor with a dark headcloth, which he then wore turban-fashion as a symbol of his status. And other gifts of cloths were made to them also, from time to time. The nobles of Ngonde likewise were formally presented with dark headcloths on succession and, as we have seen, got gifts of cloth each time the traders came.

And the custom grew up in the middle period of giving cloths to the chiefs also, the sons of the Kyungu. When the chiefs heard that the Kyungu had been buying cloths they used to come, each alone with one man, and be given some. Our evidence does not make clear whether

[1] Audrey Richards "Tribal Government in Transition." Supplement to *J.R.A.S.* Oct. 1935.

6 Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1939 FN17 Ngonde FN17

brother of the reigning Kyungu, and this fact was half his opportunity. It was a tradition in Ngonde that Mbande was a centre of trade as well as of government, and so when Peter went into trade he had a great advantage over all his rivals. He tells with great gusto the story of how, in 1911 when the price of cotton[1] was high, two firms competed for the crop of the Ngonde plain—and the firm which employed him to buy it secured it all. For as soon as the people heard that the Kyungu's brother was buying cotton they all came to him to sell. And throughout his business career the same factor has operated.

From 1899 to 1912 Peter was a employee of European trading firms, from 1913 to 1918 he worked in partnership with them and from 1919 onwards he worked on his own. Now from 1914 to 1923 trade boomed and this fact was the other half of his opportunity. In 1913 his own capital was about £50, in 1923 it was well over £1,000, and he had four shops of his own.

After the war he employed men to hoe cotton for him also; and here he was greatly assisted by shrewd advice from European friends who watched the market. In 1920 the price of cotton suddenly dropped and he gained nothing, but he was advised to persevere and did so; and in the next two years he made a profit of £120. But in 1923 when the price of cotton dropped again he advisedly planted none.[2]

Now from 1923 onwards the pressure of his administrative duties began to drive him out of business and from 1924 he kept one shop only open. His savings he turned either into cattle or into burnt-brick houses for his wives and so passed safely through the world-wide slump. In 1937 he still had a herd of cattle worth about £400 and six brick houses, whose total cost was £155, together with a small stock of cloth in his one remaining shop. Figures have a purely relative significance, and these figures in Ngonde represent great wealth.[3]

The effect of this private fortune on the present constitution of Ngonde is very great indeed, for it enables the Kyungu to maintain a state comparable to that of his predecessors. Had he only his official salary to rely upon he could not do this and his authority and prestige in Ngonde would be less than they are. His successor and his heir will not be the same man; and it follows inescapably that, if the present rate of salary remains substantially unchanged and if other factors remain equal too, then his successor's authority and prestige will be less than his.

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[1] Native cotton planting was early encouraged in Ngonde.

[2] Soon afterwards a boll-weevil scare caused cotton-planting to be suspended in Ngonde for many years.

[3] Very few chiefs or commoners in Ngonde have more than £20 worth of stock in their herds. There are c. 30,000 cattle in Ngonde, which gives an average of c. 3 head per adult male, and 3 head are worth about £4.

9: Wilson E-5 (1934-1955) 1959
F317 Ngonde F317
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rulers were not of the royal blood but 'nobles' (*amakembwe*), descendants of the five leading men who had arrived with the Kyungu, of those he found already occupying the country, and of those who arrived after him. Later the slaughter of the Kyungu's sons ceased, and as they grew up they were established as subordinate chiefs through his territories, gradually taking over power from the commoners who had previously ruled, by a process familiar in other parts of Africa.[1] But the 'nobles' retained considerable power. At Lubaga the descendants of the two men who had arrived with the first Lwembe, and of some of those who were there before him, became priests, and priests only; in Ngonde those of similar origin developed secular, as well as ritual, functions.

The reasons why the office of Kyungu developed into a paramount chieftainship, and that of the Lwembe did not, have been examined in a previous publication,[2] and may therefore be dealt with very briefly here. The most important factor was that the Kyungu exported ivory and amassed wealth which was used to bind territorial rulers to him, while the Lwembe remained cut off from the outside world and did not trade at all. The geographical situation largely accounts for this. The ivory of Ngonde first went north, and later south-east, across the Lake, and Mbande was well situated for both routes. It lies eight miles from the Lake and close to a defile which leads from the lake-shore plain to an open table-land stretching north to Lake Tanganyika, the very route which engineers later selected for the Stevenson road. Lubaga, on the other hand, is forty miles from the Lake and the only routes northward lay over broken country and passes 8,000 feet high. Giraud remarks in his journal that the Nyakyusa were the only people he had come across among whom the chiefs did not claim at least one tusk of every elephant killed;[3] they did not claim it, for they had no use for the ivory; but the Kyungu's right to a tusk from every elephant killed was enforced.

The growth of a paramount chieftainship in Ngonde was slow. The early Kyungus lived within an enclosure on Mbande to which only their personal servants and the nobles of Ngonde had

[1] *cf.* M. Hunter, *Reaction to Conquest*, p. 380; H. Kuper, *An African Aristocracy*, pp. 13-14; I. Schapera, in *African Political Systems* (edited Fortes and Evans-Pritchard), pp. 60-1.

[2] Godfrey Wilson, *The Constitution of Ngonde*, Rhodes-Livingstone Papers No. 3 (1939).

[3] V. Giraud, *Les Lacs d'Afrique Equatoriale* (1890), p. 186.

10:Gulliver E-5 (1954-1955) 1958 F3617 Ngoroba F3617
Nyakyusa

well covered with vegetation and with an reliable and plentiful a rainfall, yet, of course, the actual pasturage available is very considerably less as so much of the land is taken for arable and building purposes. There is in practice a most acute shortage of grazing land everywhere, except in certain parts of the north-west Highlands (Ukukwe). This shortage is most critical during the wet season, for at other times of the year the herds are able to graze over the arable fields, where herbage grows exceptionally rapidly after harvest as a result of the high rainfall.

Traditionally, each village had a roughly demarcated area of common pasturage which was not, and could not be, used for arable purposes. With the increased demand for arable land, this commonage has almost everywhere in the Lake Plains been gradually whittled away for permanent arable holdings. Headmen who control these pastures, and many of their chiefs too, are much worried about this process, about the break with tradition and the modern pastoral difficulties, but arable needs are given priority over grazing and the practice continues. In the flood plains, the higher-density regions, common pasturage has by now almost disappeared altogether. The little which remains is largely unusable for cultivation, consisting of infertile or badly drained areas - often the sandy, coastal strips covered with dense thicket and tall sedges which provide very little useful grazing. During the dry season, after the paddy harvest, the situation is fair, but during the cultivation season pasturage is entirely inadequate, and in addition the cattle are compelled to live and graze in extremely arduous conditions of standing water, mud, mosquitoes and flies. They do not obtain enough food then and they lose condition badly. There are many deaths from exhaustion, near-starvation and disease, and this affects the immature stock particularly. Only by obstinate tenacity on the part of both man and beast can the herds be retained at all. There is no tradition of stall-feeding and so far the Nyakyusa have refused to adopt this measure of alleviation.

Yet, as the Nyakyusa are quick to point out, each family has only a few cattle. Most families have a cow or two, and the average is only about two to three head per family - *cf.* Table VI, page 34. Owners of large herds are relatively few, and herds of more than ten cattle in a single family are very uncommon. Although the cattle population is too great for the pasture resources now available, yet the animals are fairly evenly and thinly distributed amongst the dense human population. Goats and sheep are few - about 600 altogether - in the Lake Plains and of no significance. It is important to note that here we do not have a situation of large herds which might be reduced by some form of culling.

Cattle are held in high esteem by all Nyakyusa as a source of valued milk for the daily diet, as the means to marriage (in bridewealth), as a store of capital, as a symbol of prestige and as an essential element in important ceremonial activity. This kind of value system needs no emphasis here as it is common to much of Eastern Africa, but it may be noted that one of the principle uses of the large sums of money saved from wages in mining employment (labour migration)[1] and from the profits of cash-cropping at home is in the purchase of cattle. It is thought that money is best invested, saved and used in that way, once immediate material needs have been met.

Even with the high proportion of deaths from disease and the appalling conditions of the wet season, there are indications that the numbers of cattle are not decreasing and there may well be local increases. Apart from natural increase, there is fairly heavy buying from the Ndali people to the north-west in Rungwe District, and also from farther afield in Northern Nyasaland, and in Nyamwanga and Fipa tribal areas (albeit illicitly).

1. During the course of my earlier labour migration enquiries men would usually estimate their savings for me, when completing routine questionnaires, by the number of cattle they could buy.

12: Bisgaard E-5 (1955) 1962 FWI? Ngonde FWI?
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patterns burned into the bamboos; they are hung upside down so the dust will not settle in them. The bamboo is the natural partition of the bamboo room.

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The house was standing on high, slightly sloping ground, and like the two mentioned house it was buttressed by a great number of thick branches. Incidentally, it seemed to be very old and rickety. Inside, there were a great many posts supporting the horizontal bamboo ceiling and the eaves of firewood. All posts were bifurcated and held the beams solidly in place. The diameter of the house was the usual 6.5 metres, but in this case there was no inner partition. As this woman was very poor, she had no bed, but slept on a mat on the floor. Only very rarely is there no bed in the houses. I remember having seen this only three times.

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The hearth was the usual type: three decorated square stones, rising to a height of 30 cm above the floor, but being sunk 30 cm into the ground. Here they were positioned on one side, to ensure that the entire goat would not catch fire, and to make for easy escape of the smoke through the doorway. None of the houses have other means of smoke outlet.

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Alongside the wall were calabashes, jars, and baskets, material for the baskets, and a little away from the wall, the large mill-stone and its appurtenant smaller grinding stone. A hen's nest was not missing either. Along one side was fixed a small under-ceiling for the storage of small things. Two or three bananas, meant to be her next meal, were lying on the floor near one of the posts. From the left she crawled down a rafthkin in which she had been carrying her child. Its inside was of a reddish colour.

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[482 237]

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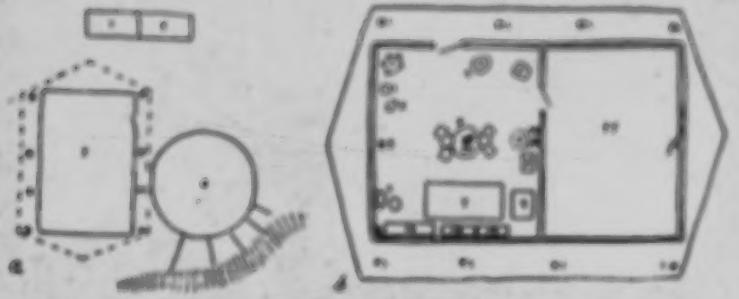

a. Site plan of Malia Ulinyilanya's houses. 1, bee-coops; 2, drying-racks for crops; 3, Malia's dikaga with roof supports along sides; 4, dikaga belonging to Malia's husband, with buttresses at low ground.—b. Plan of Malia's dikaga (barred window in back room). 1, hen's nest; 2, dimie (stool); 3, posts (those going up to ridge of roof are filled in); 4, large basket; 5, basket; 6, clay base round twin posts; 7, Malia's bed; 8, chest; 9, wooden chest; 10, table; 11, back room, having bamboo ceiling carried by bamboo cross beam (between posts marked 3); the room is used for storing clothes, etc.; 12, shelves.

14: Lehmann E-S (1939)[1951 F707 Ngonde F707 Nyakyusa

bells are also worn by men, nowadays below the other clothing. More and more pieces of cotton with imprinted patterns have come into vogue. They are worn around the lower part of the body or below the shoulders or fastened about one of them, and are bought from Indian shops. That this modern fashion, however, is something new in such places which are a little remoter from direct European influence was demonstrated to me when I came through a small village in the environment of Masoko. There by chance I met some young girls carrying a piece of cloth on the top of a long pole as if it were a banner. On enquiry I was told that this "banner" was nothing other than a piece of cloth newly bought by a woman of that village and that it was hoisted on a pole and carried in procession out of sheer joy that this woman had been able to buy it.

Menfolk throughout are fuller dressed, especially when they go dancing. The women, on the other hand, wear their ordinary dress also on such occasions. The dancing costume of the men — only the younger men participate in dancing — consists of a sort of tight-jacket or sweater and wide robes with coloured patterns. The hair is adorned with feathers. At work the men mostly wear only loin cloths or shorts. After work especially the older men wrap their bodies in blankets. It is very seldom nowadays to find even very old men still wearing the former national dress: a bundle of long grass in front and a smaller one behind tied to the waist by means of a string, as I found a man on a military spot near Rungwe Station. Little boys go altogether naked untill they are about three years of age. Little girls begin to wear a small *mbuki* at an earlier age.

13. Art. One of the most interesting and striking features in the artistic endowment of the Nyakyusa are the decorations on the outer-walls of their huts. The latter are only painted, however, when the exterior of the framework of bamboo is mud covered, otherwise only the wooden doors (*ikifiga*, door) of the huts are painted. By no means every hut or house is painted, but only a limited number in each village, probably depending on the presence and industry of an artist as this art is as in other cases an individualistic one. One such artist was introduced to me in a village near Rutenganio. The ornaments consist in most cases of geometrical patterns in white and black, seldom in other colours, or they represent different sorts of animals, e. g. elephants, horses, cattle, snakes, etc. The richest designs I found in a long extended village on the right bank of the upper Kiwira. In an other case the names of the animals were written in Swahili below